



Testimony Concerning BILL 42-21- Child Care- Early Submitted to Montgomery County Council

November 28, 2021

Position- Support

My name is Ruby Daniels, a family child care provider for over 28 years and the President of Maryland State Family Child Care Association representing over 4,500 family child care providers in the state of Maryland. Our members include Family Child Care Association of Montgomery County and Latino Child Care Association of Maryland.

Family childcare has been and continues an integral part of the Early Care and Education system in Maryland, especially during the COVID 19 pandemic. Family child care were instrumental in caring for a large portion of children of essential personnel. The pandemic has opened new possibilities but at the same time revealed deep rooted problems in Early Care and Education System. It has been almost 2 years and childcare providers have continued to decline.

For years, family childcare providers who oftentimes work alone in our homes, have been isolated and during the pandemic we are even more isolated. A lot struggled to fill application for grants and other financial relief and most of the time we do not know where to turn. Even if we find the resources, Providers who speak English as a Second Language do not fully understand the resources available to them or remain in silence about their difficulties. Often under resourced, underrepresented and silent, the Entity

can be the strong advocate to enable the child care sector and its workforce to thrive and be sustainable into the future.

The Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity will also give the family child care providers an authentic and strategic voice on the Entity's Board of Directors. A strategic governance role that has not been offered before in this space. The entity will allow a clear understanding of what family child care providers need and how we can work together to improve the early care and education system. Currently most groups work in silos, oftentimes unaware of what the other is doing. This can change with the Entity.

The Entity can view the Early care and Education sector where we can be connected and have a clear view of how each segment of the early care and education system can work in harmony without bias and with clear transparency.

As we continue to decline in numbers, there are 609 fewer family child care programs in Maryland as of November 2021. The Entity can be a place where we can fully understand the situation that affects family child care providers, child care centers, families and the children of Montgomery county and provide a place where we can create innovative and creative solutions to the problems plaguing the family child care programs, from Child Care scholarships, staffing shortages, pre K expansion and soon to be universal pre K. With the current pre-K expansion, we are included in the mixed delivery system in theory, but in reality, there are only a few that can qualify. Even if we qualify, to create an effective learning environment, our classroom will solely be made

up of pre k students, giving up our infant and toddlers further exacerbating the infant and toddler shortage. The State Coordinating Entity can be a place where we can put our collective ideas in order to stop the decline of family child care programs.

I urge you to give Bill 42-21 a favorable vote, the Early Care and Education Coordinating Entity can provide a better working relationship and understanding of the Early Care and Education system that ultimately benefits the children, families, and the economy of Montgomery County and beyond. Thank you.

